



ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION

Quest for Gold – Ontario Athlete Assistance Program 2016-2017

ATHLETE SELECTION CRITERIA

- 1.0 *Quest for Gold* – Ontario Athlete Assistance Program 2016-2017 (OAAP) is funded by the Government of Ontario, through the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS), and operated through the Sport, Recreation & Community Programs Division. The overarching goal of the *Quest for Gold* – OAAP is directly related to the High Performance Sport goal of the *Canadian Sport Policy* – that Canadians are systematically achieving world-class results at the highest levels of international competition – by improving the performance and number of Ontario athletes performing at the national and international level, thereby contributing to the improved performance of Canada at international competitions.

Specific objectives of the program are:

- a) To help athletes continue their pursuit of athletic excellence at the highest levels of national and international competition;
- b) To encourage athletes to stay in Ontario to live and train;
- c) To compensate athletes for earnings lost while training;
- d) To enable athletes to successfully pursue excellence in sport while fulfilling their educational goals;
- e) To increase athlete access to improved high performance coaching; and
- f) To enhance training and competitive opportunities available to athletes.

The intent of the OAAP is to provide funding to individual athletes in the sport's Train to Train and Train to Win categories based on their demonstrated commitment to high performance sport, allowing them to continue to pursue athletic excellence at the highest levels of national and international competition. **Only those athletes that meet the required minimum performance standard detailed in this Selection Criteria will be considered for this program.** Ideally an athlete will first receive a Quest for Gold "Ontario Card" for 1 to 3 years, which will allow them to train towards the goal of a national team position in subsequent years. Once an Ontario athlete reaches the national level and becomes a recipient of Sport Canada's carding program, they become eligible for the Quest for Gold "Canada Card". Athletes who are not planning to train towards this level of competition should not apply for this program.

2.0 **How does it work?**

In accordance with the OAAP guidelines, ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION develops sport-specific selection criteria and forms a Selection Committee that will apply these criteria. The top-ranked athletes, based on the criteria, will be awarded Ontario Card status in 2016-2017. This Selection Criteria has been approved by the Board of Directors and reviewed by MTCS staff. Nominated athletes will be required to sign and comply with an Athlete Agreement between the athlete and ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION. Carding status will be for one year starting April 1, 2016 ending March 31, 2017.

- 2.1 For 2016-2017, the MTCS has allocated ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION a total of 12 Ontario cards (12 male Cards).
- 2.2 An athlete's age will be determined as of January 1, 2016.

ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION is not obligated to assign all Ontario Cards if there are an insufficient number of athletes who have demonstrated potential to be considered for future National Teams.

2.3 The Selection Committee, as approved by the ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION Board of Directors is comprised of the following members:

Dave Northern, Vice President
George Ryder, Head Coach Team Ontario, Past President
Karen Mills, Secretary

How much funding is available?

The exact level of funding for the 2016-2017 carding year will be determined by the MTCS after the total number of athletes nominated for Ontario Card status has been determined. Funding will be released prior to March 31, 2017.

How will the ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION Selection Committee decide who receives funding?

The ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION Selection Committee will use the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport Eligibility Criteria and the Sport Specific Selection Criteria detailed below to determine which athletes will be nominated for Ontario Card status in 2016-2017:

3.0 Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport Eligibility Criteria:

All athletes must meet the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport's minimum athlete eligibility criteria:

- Athlete must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident (previously known as a Landed Immigrant).
- Athlete must be a permanent resident of Ontario **for one year prior** to his/her nomination for carding status, (and continue to be a permanent resident throughout the term of the agreement).
- Athletes who have achieved Canada Card status (carded by Sport Canada) are not eligible for Ontario Cards.
- Athletes must be living in and continuing to train in Ontario.

3.1 Residency Exceptions:

Exceptions to these criteria, known as a "Residency Exception" will be considered **on a case specific basis by the ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION** Selection Committee provided that the athlete can substantiate in writing that:

(a) He/She cannot receive the required level of training in Ontario and is out of the province **temporarily** during the year (i.e. due to lack of facilities, coaching, competitions);

(b) He/She must attend a post-secondary institution out-of-province either because the course of study is not offered by an Ontario institution; or

(c) It is more financially feasible to attend a post-secondary institution out-of-province, or other extenuating circumstances that require the athlete to be out of the province.

Any change in an athlete's residency status must be communicated in writing to the PSO/MSO immediately.

The onus is on the athlete to demonstrate that he/she needs to be out-of-province for one of the above reasons. **The athlete must submit written documentation to the ONTARIO AMATEUR**

SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION by no later than November 25, 2016, clearly indicating how they meet a residency exception(s).

Athlete's applying for a Residency Exception related to exception (a) above, who are training at an NSO-approved National Training Centre MUST include a letter from the NSO outlining their support for the athlete, the progress the athlete is making and the athlete's potential to make the national team level. Additional documentation may include, but shall not be limited to an explanation of why the athlete is training out of province, whether or not the athlete was formally invited by the NSO, what additional opportunities are being made available beyond those provided in Ontario; and any other information that will illustrate that the athlete is receiving enhanced training while still meeting all obligations of the ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION.

3.2 Length of time living outside Ontario:

Athletes living outside Ontario for more than 30 consecutive days within the ministry fiscal year 2016-2017 for athletic or academic purposes must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the PSO/MSO Selection Committee that appropriate training programs are in place and are being monitored by the PSO/MSO. The onus is on the athlete to:

1. Provide a written plan outlining their training and competition plans to the PSO/MSO prior to their departure from Ontario, as part of their Residency Exception request (November 25, 2016); and
2. Adhere to the PSO/MSO-approved competition and training plan throughout the carding cycle. At a minimum, this requires regular (monthly) contact by the athlete with the PSO/MSO (Dave Northern); and
3. Submit regular (monthly) training logs to the PSO/MSO to track progress against the PSO/MSO-approved competition and training plan.

Athletes who were formally invited to and are currently participating in their NSO's national team training program are exempt from this requirement.

3.3 Ministry criteria continued:

- Athlete must be a member in good standing with PSO/MSO and NSO where applicable;
- Athlete must have entered into a Sports Organization - Athlete Agreement with his or her PSO/MSO and must be in full compliance with the terms and conditions of that agreement;
- Athlete must have met all terms and conditions of any previous *Quest for Gold* Sports Organization – Athlete Agreements to the satisfaction of the PSO/MSO in order to be eligible for consideration in 2016-2017;
- Athlete must demonstrate a commitment and dedication to a proper training and competitive program, the goal of which is to continue to train towards a national team position and Sport Canada carding;
- Athlete's coach should be minimum Level 2 NCCP certified or trained status Competition Stream or the sport's equivalent in the Instruction Stream, or be engaged in completing this training, as determined by the PSO;
- Athlete must not be under a sanction that prohibits competition as per the Canadian Anti-Doping Policy;
- Athlete must be attending an educational institution full-time (i.e. elementary and secondary schools):
 - Exceptions will be made provided that the athlete can substantiate that his/her training will not allow for full-time attendance or if an athlete requires special needs that preclude full or part-time attendance (e.g. Athlete with a disability (AWAD) athlete);
- Athletes who have completed their area of study at the secondary level (i.e. high school) and who continue to train towards participation in major national or international competitions will also be considered;

- If eligible, the athlete must compete, and continue to compete solely for Ontario and/or Canada for one year from the date of the Minister's letter informing the athlete of acceptance into OAAP program, at Canada Games and other national competitions involving provincial team competitions;
- Athlete must not receive financial support from any other provincial/territorial athlete assistance program. This does not include academic scholarships, bursaries, student grants, student loans, social assistance, disability pensions, and other forms of financial assistance that have nothing to do with competitive sport.
- Eligibility will be limited to Ontario junior-aged athletes, ages 11-22 ("junior-aged" refers to chronological age, not a sport's specific age category - only exception is for PSO/MSOs using 30% of Ontario Card allotment for athletes older than 22 years of age who have been identified as a potential next generation national team athlete by the PSO/MSO's selection process.

3.4 Residency Exemption for Military Families: The one-year Ontario residency requirement is waived for any Ontario Card or Canada Card applicant who is a spouse or dependant of a: Regular Force member of the Canadian Forces; or Reservist currently deployed by the Canadian Forces into active service and who takes up residence in Ontario during the fiscal year. This means that eligible military family members now qualify for OAAP funding immediately upon becoming residents of Ontario. Please contact ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION for more information if you are applying for this exemption.

- To be deemed a potential next generation national team athlete, the athlete must be age-eligible to compete on the national team in the year following receipt of Ontario Card funding.
- All athletes under the age of 18 must have their parent or legal guardian sign their OAAP application form. Cheques will be processed in the name of the eligible athlete.
- An athlete can only be nominated to receive *Quest for Gold* funding in one sport.

4.0 Athletes funded through the Sport Canada AAP:

Ontario athletes who have been nominated and accepted for funding through Sport Canada's AAP within the government of Ontario's fiscal year (April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017) and who continue to meet AAP and OAAP eligibility requirements will automatically be considered for a *Quest for Gold* 'Canada Card'. MTCS will contact those athletes directly at the mailing and email addresses the athlete provided to Sport Canada. Athletes are solely responsible for ensuring that their contact information is kept accurate and up to date at all times.

An athlete who received Sport Canada AAP carding during any part of MTCS' fiscal year April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016 and/or any part of fiscal year April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017 and is no longer in receipt of Sport Canada Athlete Assistance shall not be eligible to receive *Quest for Gold* funding during fiscal year 2016-2017 (April 1, 2016 to March 31, 2017.)

The intent of this rule is to prevent athletes whose performance levels and rankings no longer qualify them for Sport Canada carding from taking an Ontario Card from a future national-level athlete.

4.1 Canada Card Exception (CCE)

Exceptions may apply to this rule (known as a **Canada Card Exception (CCE)**) and will be considered by the Ministry on a case-by-case basis. Exceptions may include, but may not be limited to logistical or administrative changes (e.g. reduction in Sport Canada carding allocation), injuries, etc.

It is the sole responsibility of the athlete to contact ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION Selection Committee prior to (November 25, 2016) to request a CCE. The athlete must submit, in writing, an explanation of why they have not been, or do not expect to be re-carded by their NSO. The submission must include a statement from the NSO, signed and dated on their letterhead, confirming that

the athlete still has potential to return to the NSO's carding program in the future. It is the responsibility of the athlete to submit this letter to the PSO; the ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION will not obtain this letter from the NSO on the athlete's behalf.

ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION will then contact MTCS in writing prior to the submission of the Athlete Nomination Form to seek individual Canada Card Exceptions. ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION is not responsible for seeking a CCE for any athlete unless requested to do so by the athlete as detailed above.

5.0 National College Athletic Association (NCAA):

On August 1, 2013, the NCAA revised their By-law that previously prevented an athlete from accepting grants from a governmental entity, such as Quest for Gold. Despite this change, any athlete considering an application to an NCAA institution is strongly encouraged to contact the NCAA Eligibility Center prior to applying for QFG funding.

The onus is entirely on the athlete to determine the impact of accepting OAAP funding on current or future NCAA eligibility and to decide whether or not to accept OAAP funding. The athlete will be required to acknowledge this onus and responsibility when signing the OAAP Ontario Card application form and agreeing to the related terms and conditions of the program. Athletes are strongly encouraged to contact the NCAA Eligibility Center to determine the impact of *Quest for Gold* - OAAP funding on current or future eligibility for a NCAA scholarship or on eligibility to compete in a non-scholarship NCAA sport.

National Collegiate Athletic Association www.ncaa.org

NCAA Eligibility Center mailing address:

NCAA Eligibility Center P.O. Box 7136, Indianapolis, IN 46207

Toll-free phone number (U.S. callers) - Customer service line – 877-262-1492

Phone number (international callers) - Customer service line – 317-223-0700

Fax number - 317-968-5100

6.0 ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION Athlete Selection Criteria:

The following sport specific athlete selection criteria will be utilized in the identification, ranking and selection of athletes for Ontario Cards:

1. Athletes must be male competitive (Ontario Amateur Softball Association) Fast Pitch player.
2. Athletes must be a member in good standing with the Ontario Amateur Softball Association, Softball Ontario and Softball Canada.
3. Athletes who have been carded by Sport Canada are deemed ineligible for Ontario Cards.
4. All athletes must sign and abide by an Athlete Assistance Program Agreement. Athletes under the age of 18 years of age must have a parent or legal guardian sign the agreement in conjunction with the athlete. Athletes that received Quest for Gold funding in 2015-2016 must meet all the terms of the 2015-2016 Ontario Amateur Softball Association's Quest for Gold Athlete Agreement before the Ontario Amateur Softball Association's Selection Committee will consider their application for carding in 2016-2017.
5. Athletes must be in the age group 16 - 20 years of age (as at January 1, 2016, years of birth 1995 – 1999 inclusive), deemed to be potential next generation National Team (i.e. 2018 WBSC Junior Men's World Championship, 2017 Team Ontario) members.
6. All Athletes will be evaluated based on the total accumulative points system overall and rated amongst all athletes being considered. Athletes must accumulate a minimum of 40 points in order to be considered: (See Note 6)
 1. 2016 Canadian Championships (See Note 1)
 - A. Medal Winners (Note 5)

Gold	20
Silver	15
Bronze	10

B.	Top Batter, Top Pitcher, All Star		20
C.	MVP		30
D.	All athletes who participate in at least 1 game		5
2.	2016 U18 Midget Eliminations and U21 Junior A Eliminations (See Note 2)		
A.	Medal Winners	Gold	15
		Silver	10
		Bronze	5
B.	MVP, Top Pitcher		20
3.	2016 Junior Men's National Team (See Note 3)		
A.	Camp attendance		10
B.	Participation in 2016 WBSC Junior World Championship		75
C.	2016 WBSC Junior World Championship All Star, Batting Champion or Pitching Award		30
D.	MVP		40
4.	2017 U21 Male Team Ontario (See Note 4)		
A.	Member of Team Ontario		20
B.	Alternate or Extra member		10

Note 1: 2016 Canadian Championship - U18 Midget Boys held on Aug 9 to 14, 2016 in Saskatoon, SK.
2016 Canadian Championship - U21 Junior Men's held on Aug 2 to 7, 2016 in Tavistock, ON.

Note 2: 2016 U18 Midget Eliminations held June 24 to 26, 2016 in Cobourg, ON.
2016 U21 Junior A Provincial Championship held on July 1 to 3, 2016 in Grafton, ON.

Note 3: 2016 Junior Men's National Team WBSC Championship held July 24 to 30, 2016 in Midland, Michigan.

Note 4: 2016 Team Ontario members and alternates as announced in September 2016.

Note 5: Players must have played a minimum of 5 round robin games and had a minimum of 2.5 plate appearances per the number of round robin games that they played or pitched in 5 round robin games in order to receive these points.

Note 6: Players will only be awarded points in the age group that they originally are registered in. For example, U18 Midget players who are signed on a U18 Midget team and are picked up by a U21 Junior team will only receive points for their performance with the U18 Midget team. U18 Midget aged players who are registered on a U21 Junior team will only receive points for their performance while playing for the U21 Junior team.

7.0 Breaking a Tie:

If there is a tie in the final score between 2 or more athletes, the Selection Committee will use information as posted on the official websites of the age specific Canadian Championships in the following order to break the tie:

1. Round robin batting average (must have played a minimum of 5 round robin games and had a minimum of 2.5 plate appearances per the number of round robin games they played or pitched in 5 round robin games).
2. If players are still tied, the next tie breaker will be the Playoff round batting average (must have played a minimum of 3 playoff games and had a minimum of 2.5 plate appearances per the number of playoff games they played or pitched in 3 playoff games).

ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION has no criteria for ranking an athlete who is unable to meet these requirements as detailed above due to illness, injury or pregnancy.

- 8.0 Alternates:** ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION will also nominate alternates to those athletes nominated for Ontario Card status. Alternates will be those athletes who are ranked directly behind those athletes nominated for the allotment of Ontario Cards in a particular category/discipline. The names of alternates will be published along with the names of nominated athletes. If an athlete drops out or is removed from the OAAP an alternate will be substituted into that athlete's position, provided that:
- Alternate is substituted within 2016-2017 fiscal year;
 - An alternate meeting all requirements is available from the same category/discipline/card level (Full/Half);
 - Funding for athlete being substituted is still available within fiscal year (e.g. full funding for card has not already been paid out to athlete no longer in program).
- 9.0** Any athlete requesting a "Residency Exception" must submit this information by November 25, 2016 as detailed above.
- 10.0** The Sports Organization – Athlete Agreement will only come into effect if an athlete is selected and accepts carding status through the OAAP program. Athletes who fail to return a signed Athlete Agreement by the deadline date will not be carded.
- 10.1 ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION** will publish or make known a draft list of athletes nominated for Ontario Card status by no later than **January 19, 2017**.

In the event of a conflict or inconsistency between the MTCS eligibility requirements detailed in the MTCS binder provided to PSO/MSOs and duplicated in the Athlete Handbook provided to each nominated athlete and the eligibility requirements listed in the PSO/MSO Athlete Selection Criteria Document prepared by the PSO/MSO, the MTCS Binder/Athlete Handbook shall prevail.
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11.0 Appeals

Athletes who have not been nominated for an Ontario Card by the ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION Selection Committee or who have been nominated for a 'Half Card' versus a 'Full Card', where applicable will be allowed to appeal that decision by filing a "Notice of Appeal" with MTCS. Appeals will be heard by an Appeals Committee comprised of representatives from the sport community, selected by the MTCS.

Grounds for appeals will be limited strictly to issues related to:

- A) Whether or not the Selection Committee has completed the selection process in accordance with its own published selection criteria and related procedures;
- B) Whether or not the Selection Committee applied the selection criteria in a manner that was free from bias, discrimination and/or conflict of interest.

Issues related to the specific content or selection requirements contained in the ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION Selection Criteria are not grounds for an appeal and should therefore be discussed directly with the leadership of ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION.

Please note that before an athlete can file a Notice of Appeal, he or she must first ask ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION for reasons explaining why he or she was not nominated for an Ontario Card.

If the athlete is not satisfied with the ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION response, the athlete may submit a **Notice of Appeal**, found below. A Notice of Appeal will only be accepted from the athlete or their parent/guardian on the MTCS-provided template (typed or hand-printed, no hand-written entries) through email, regular post, registered mail, courier or delivered in person. One appeal cannot be written on behalf of multiple athletes. The Notice of Appeal must be received by MTCS by noon on the deadline day. Appeals that are delivered personally or by courier shall be deemed to be received on the date of delivery.

Once MTCS has received the Notice of Appeal, it will share it with ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION, who will then submit a "**Response**" with MTCS by a specified deadline. The Response will outline why ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION believes that the Selection Committee's decision not to nominate the athlete should be upheld by the Appeals Committee. MTCS will share the ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION Response with the athlete.

If, after receiving the ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION Response, the athlete believes that ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION has raised new or additional reasons to justify the Selection Committee's decision not to nominate the athlete for an Ontario Card, then the athlete will have an opportunity to file a "**Reply**" with MTCS, responding to these additional reasons. The Reply must be limited to these additional reasons and cannot be used to make submissions already raised in the Notice of Appeal, or that the athlete neglected to include in the Notice of Appeal. The Reply will only be accepted on the MTCS-provided template.

Once MTCS receives the Notice of Appeal, the Response, and the Reply (if applicable), it will provide those materials to the Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee will discuss all appeals at once. During its review of the appeals, the Appeals Committee reserves the right to request additional information from both the athlete and ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION.

After reviewing an appeal the Appeals Committee will have the authority to:

1. Direct ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION to redo the selection process using the correct criteria/process and submit a new list of nominated athletes;
2. Deny the appeal; or
3. Allow the appeal and nominate the appellant for carding status.

Once the Appeals Committee has reached its decision, it will contact the athlete and ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION in writing to communicate its decision and the reasons therefore.

An athlete who has had his or her appeal denied is not permitted to submit a second appeal to the Appeals Committee on the same or different grounds.

Note: ONTARIO AMATEUR SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION is encouraged to resolve disputes or disagreements informally with athletes who have not been nominated to avoid, wherever possible, formal appeals.

11.1 The deadline for athletes to submit an "**Athlete's Notice of Appeal**" to the Appeals Committee is January 30, 2017 at 12 noon

11.2 Appeals must be completed on the Notice of Appeal template below and will be directed to:

Quest for Gold Appeals Committee
c/o Sport, Recreation and Community Programs Division
Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport
777 Bay Street, 18th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 1S5

**2016-2017 Quest for Gold – Ontario Athlete Assistance Program
Athlete’s Notice of Appeal Template**

The deadline for an athlete to submit an appeal to the Appeals Committee is 12 noon on January 30, 2017. Appeals will only be accepted on the MTCS-provided Notice of Appeal template. **Please refer to the appeals section of your PSO/MSO’s Athlete Selection Criteria document prior to completing this form.**

Return form to:

**Quest for Gold Appeals Committee
c/o Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport
Sport, Recreation and Community Programs Division
777 Bay Street, 18th Floor, Toronto ON M7A 1S5 Email: Scott.Cooper@ontario.ca**

Full Name _____
Address _____ City _____
Postal Code _____ Phone _____ Email _____
Sport / PSO _____

Reason for Appeal (Check all that apply):

- Whether or not the PSO/MSO has completed the selection process in accordance with its own published selection criteria and related procedures;
- Whether or not the PSO/MSO applied the section criteria in a manner that was free from bias, discrimination and/or conflict of interest.

Provide a two-line summary of the reason for the appeal:

In the space below, (continue on to next page as needed) provide the reasons communicated to you by your PSO/MSO as to why you were not nominated for an Ontario Card, and the date the information was provided. (Note: This Appeal will not be accepted unless it contains a response from your PSO/MSO.)

Date of PSO response: _____

